



## A linguistic road to semantic deference

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# A linguistic road to epistemic deference

Philippe De Brabanter & Neftalí Villanueva

Institut Jean Nicod, Paris IV Sorbonne

Institut Jean Nicod, Universidad de Granada

# Outline

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— [ imperfect mastery

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- [ imperfect mastery
- [ semantic deference: deliberate, default

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- [ imperfect mastery
- [ semantic deference: deliberate, default
- [ epistemic deference vs. semantic deference

# Outline

- [ imperfect mastery
- [ semantic deference: deliberate, default
- [ epistemic deference vs. semantic deference
- [ some applications: judicial deference, children & trust

# Imperfect mastery



# Imperfect mastery

Putnam & Burge

# Imperfect mastery

Putnam & Burge

meanings just ain't in the head

# Imperfect mastery

Putnam & Burge

meanings just ain't in the head

“I've got arthritis in the thigh”

**Aberdeen 2007**

**imperfect mastery**

— [ some methodological restrictions

— [ some methodological restrictions

direct reference

— [ some methodological restrictions

direct reference

minimal contextualism

— [ some methodological restrictions

direct reference

minimal contextualism

speakers' intuitions



— [ some methodological restrictions

direct reference

minimal contextualism

speakers' intuitions

ethnoscience

— [ some methodological restrictions

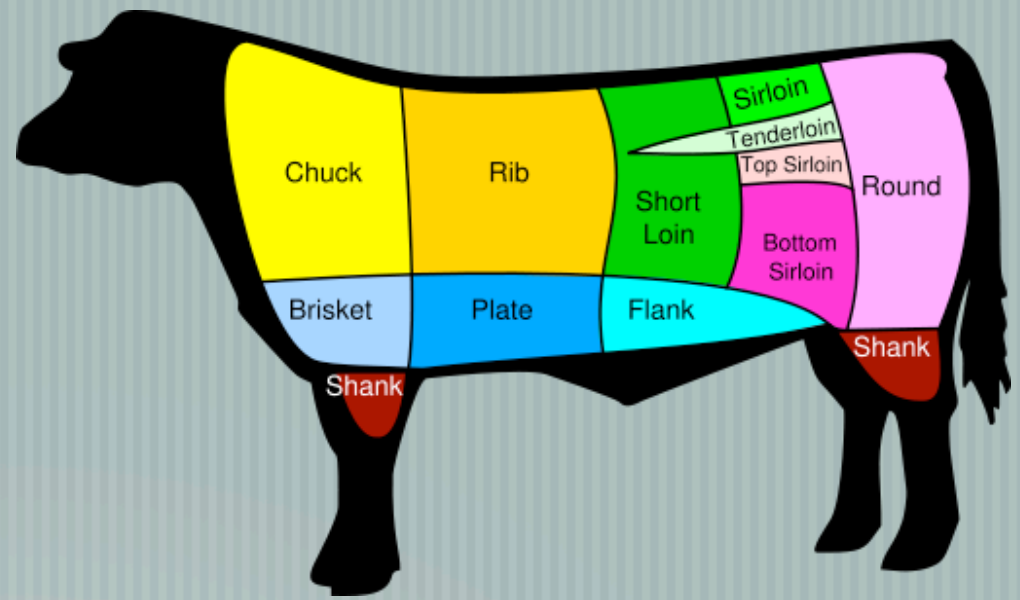
direct reference

minimal contextualism

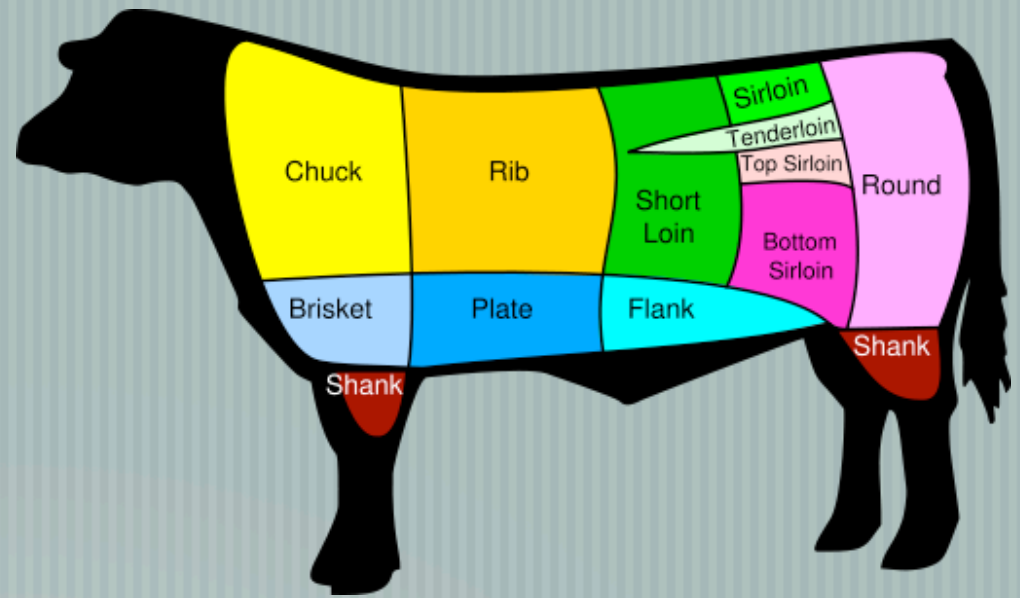
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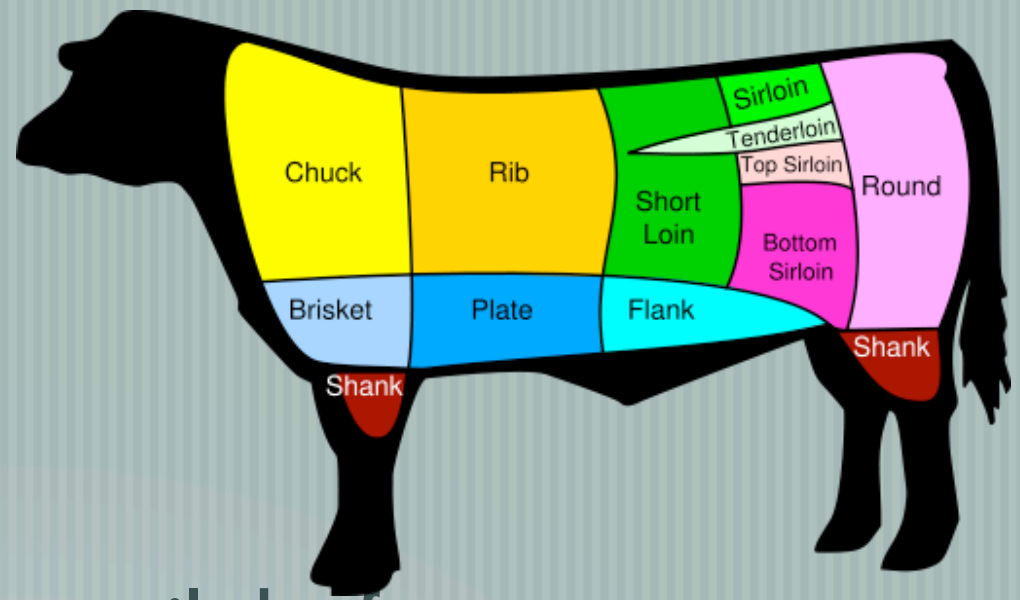
ethnoscience

contextualism vs. revisionism



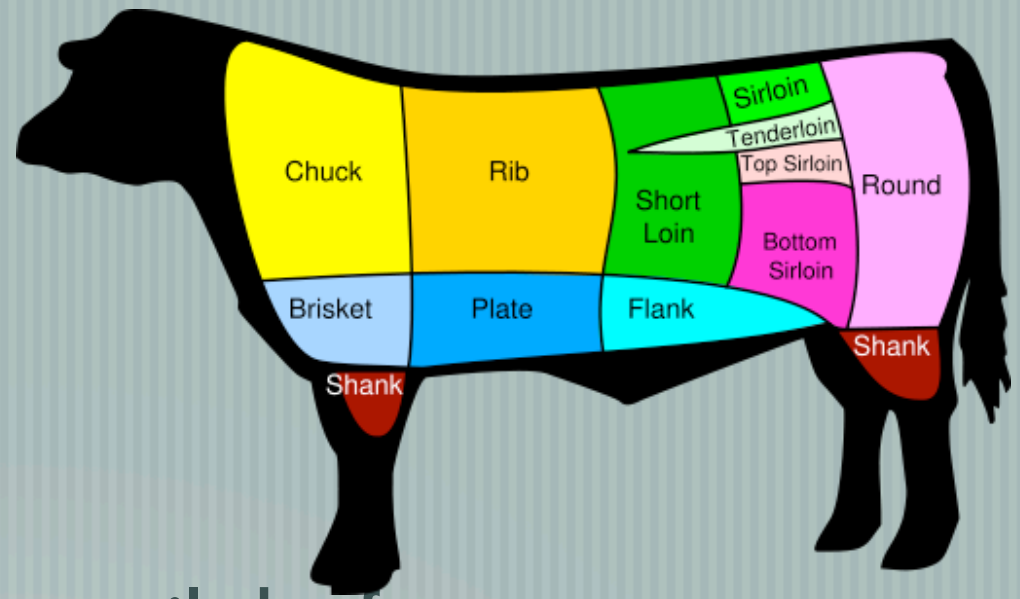
“This is not brisket! It’s pork”





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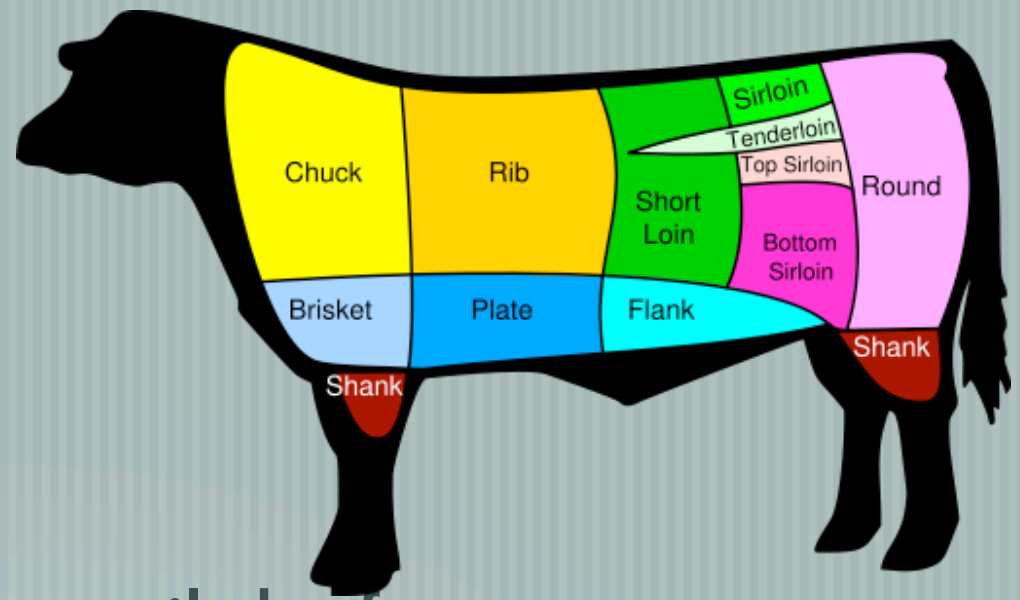
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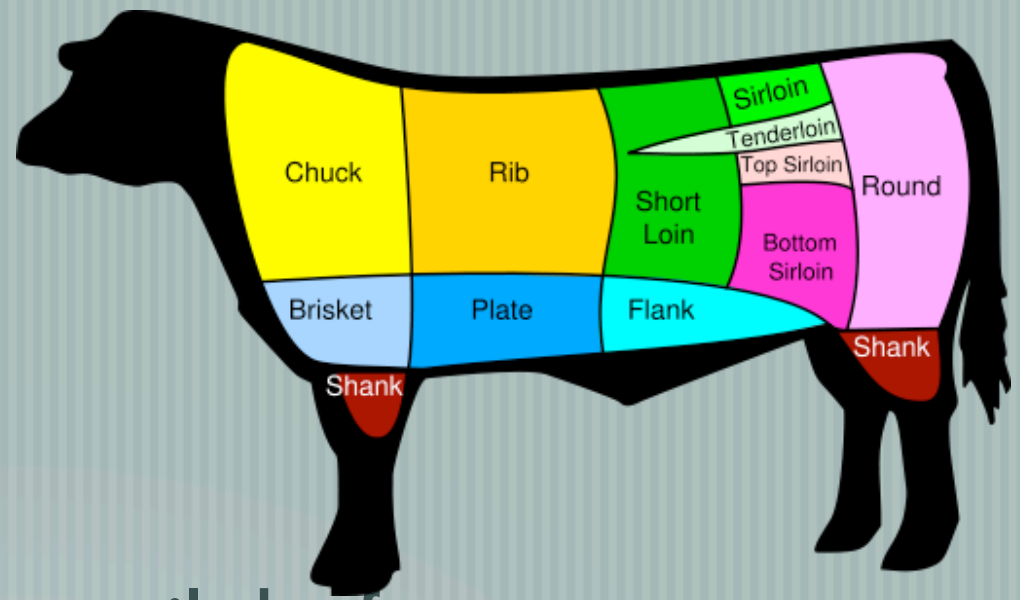


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Sharon vs. the linguistic community



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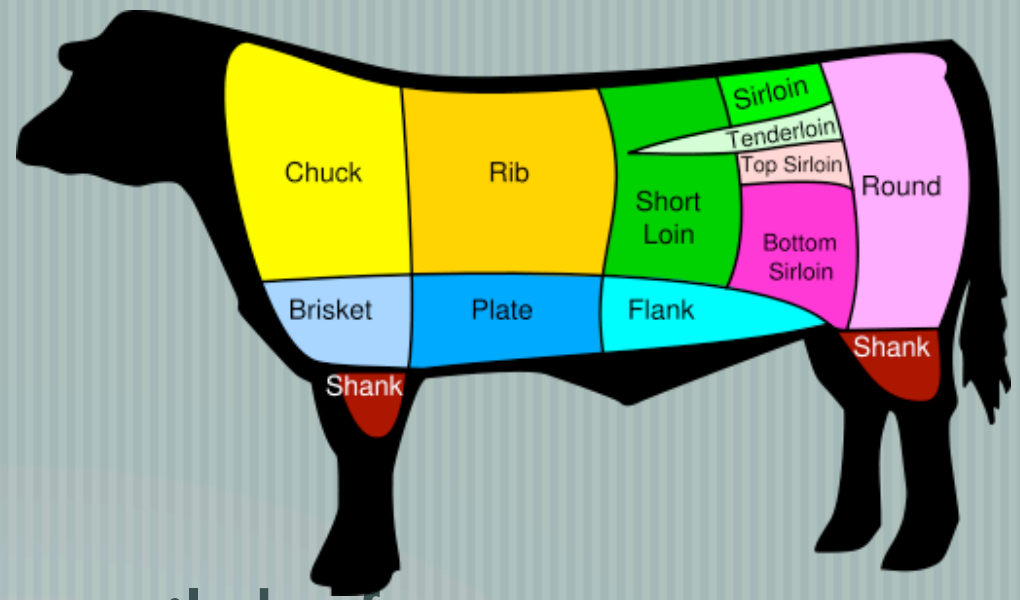
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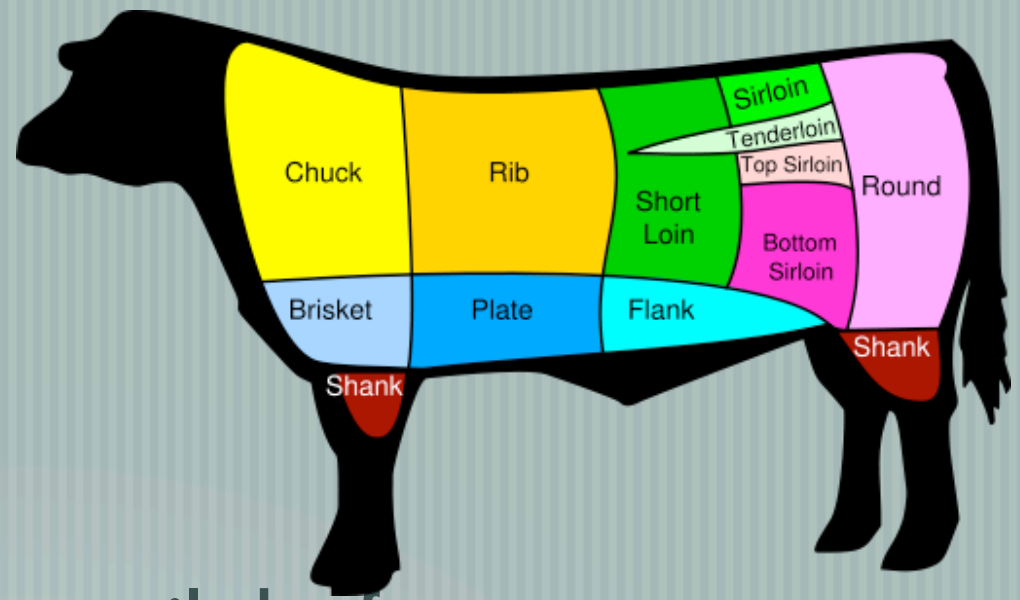
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VS.



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Sharon thinks that brisket is necessarily beef

in fact, it can be meat from many other animals

Sharon vs. the linguistic community

this is not <meat from the breast of a beef>, it’s pork

VS.

this is not <meat from the breast of some animals including pigs>, it’s pork

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**imperfect mastery**

imperfect mastery is widespread

imperfect mastery is widespread

saying true things in spite of imperfect mastery

imperfect mastery is widespread

saying true things in spite of imperfect mastery

saying false things due to imperfect mastery

imperfect mastery is widespread

saying true things in spite of imperfect mastery

saying false things due to imperfect mastery

these utterances are meaningful because they are deferential

# Deliberate semantic deference



# Deliberate semantic deference

Context 1: James confuses W. V. O. Quine with T. McPherson

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""Quine' wants to talk to us"

<McPherson, wants to talk to us>



# the differential operator (F. Recanati)

— [ the differential operator (F. Recanati)

unarticulated constituent

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unarticulated constituent

$R_x$  (expression)



— [ the differential operator (F. Recanati)

unarticulated constituent

$R_x$  (expression)

the differential operator affects the character of the  
expression under its scope

— [ the deferential operator (F. Recanati)

unarticulated constituent

$R_x$  (expression)

the deferential operator affects the character of the  
expression under its scope

$\langle R_{\text{James}} (\text{Quine}), \text{wants to talk to us} \rangle$



# deliberate semantic deference 2

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context: Sharon, a young lawyer, gets a day's training in a hospital

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"He's probably got spinocellular carcinoma, to use one of those fancy words"

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deference to the linguistic community





# Deliberate semantic deference

— [ **Deliberate semantic deference**

— [ **Criterion**

## **Deliberate semantic deference**

**Criterion**      S performs an act of deliberate semantic deference if and only if:

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“‘Quine’ wants to talk to us”





— [ **monitored** cases of deliberate semantic deference vs.  
**unmonitored** cases of deliberate semantic deference

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**Monitored**

— [ **monitored** cases of deliberate semantic deference vs.  
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**Monitored**

Quine/McPherson

— [ **monitored** cases of deliberate semantic deference vs.  
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Quine/McPherson

putative target language

# monitored cases of deliberate semantic deference vs. unmonitored cases of deliberate semantic deference

## Monitored

Quine/McPherson

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no cases of falsity due to  
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the speaker thinks she knows at least  
as much as the deferee

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## Unmonitored



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putative target language

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misunderstanding

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## Unmonitored

carcinoma

actual target language

cases of falsity due to  
misunderstanding

the speaker thinks she knows less  
than the deferee

# Epistemic deference

# Epistemic deference

— [ a case: weather report

# Epistemic deference

— [ a case: weather report

— [ criterion

# Epistemic deference

— [ a case: weather report

— [ criterion

— [ recap of varieties



# Epistemic deference

- [ a case: weather report

- [ criterion

- [ recap of varieties

- [ epistemic deference and semantic deference



# — [ epistemic deference: weather report

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Context 1: Sharon & Robbie

— [ epistemic deference: weather report

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Context 2:

— [ epistemic deference: weather report

**Context 1: Sharon & Robbie**

**Context 2:** “A large high-pressure system moving eastward across Southern Canada kept skies relatively clear across the Northeast on Monday afternoon. This ridge of high pressure was accompanied by a cool and dry polar air mass”

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Sharon defers epistemically to the meteorologist



— [ epistemic deference



— [ epistemic deference

— [ criterion

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“The high-pressure ridge came with a polar air mass. So the weather report says”





# Deference

Deference

epistemic deference

# Deference

```
graph TD; Deference --> epistemic_deference[epistemic deference]; Deference --> linguistic_deference[linguistic deference]
```

epistemic deference

linguistic deference

# Deference

epistemic deference

linguistic deference

semantic deference

# Deference

epistemic deference

linguistic deference

semantic deference

?

# Deference

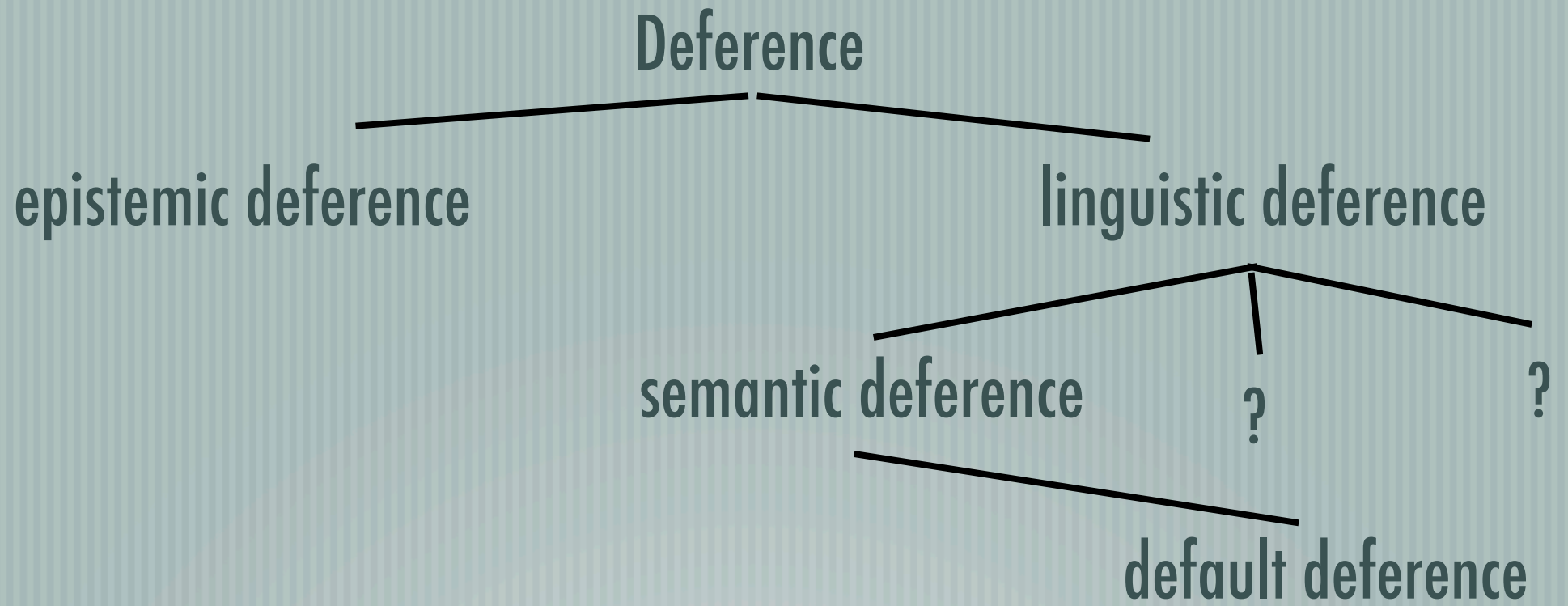
epistemic deference

linguistic deference

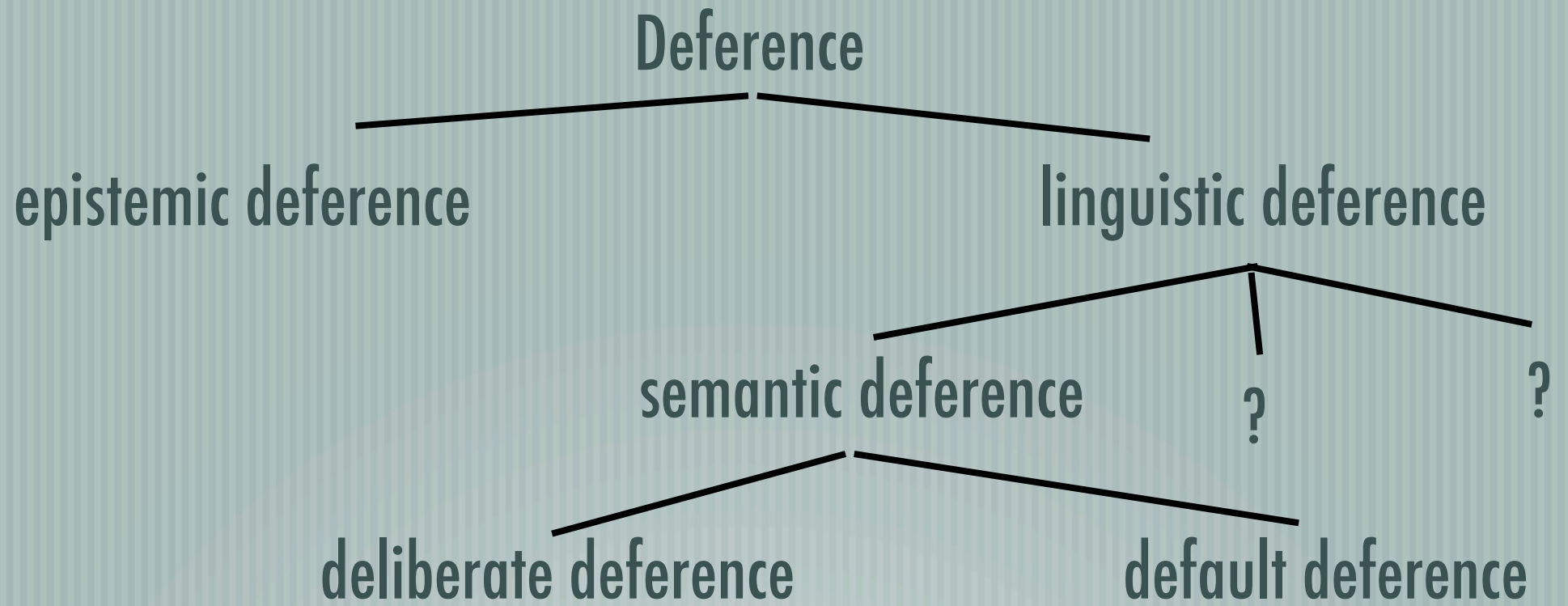
semantic deference

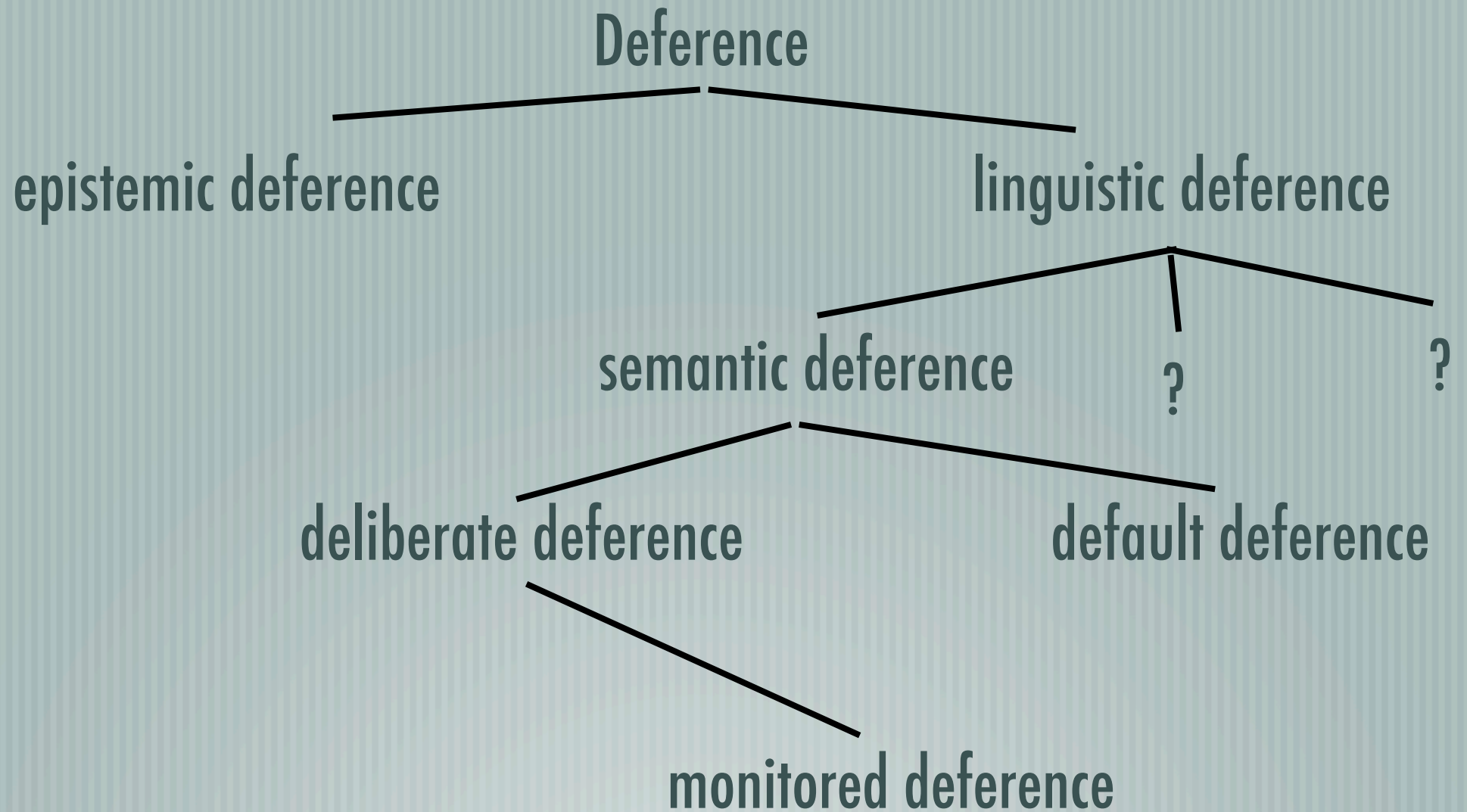
?

?









# Deference

epistemic deference

linguistic deference

semantic deference

?

?

deliberate deference

default deference

unmonitored deference

monitored deference

# Deference

epistemic deference

linguistic deference

semantic deference

?

?

deliberate deference

default deference

unmonitored deference

monitored deference

**knowledge asymmetry & deference**



# semantic and epistemic deference

— [ semantic and epistemic deference

**unmonitored** semantic deference

**monitored** semantic deference

— [ semantic and epistemic deference

**unmonitored** semantic deference

less

at least as much

**monitored** semantic deference



— [ semantic and epistemic deference

**unmonitored** semantic deference

less

knowledge asymmetry

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unmonitored semantic deference

epistemic deference to the 'expert'

less

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**monitored** semantic deference

**BUT!** case of the bold ignorant



# Back to Sharon

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epistemic deference

— [ Back to Sharon

**“The high-pressure ridge came with a polar air mass. So the weather report says”**

— [ Back to Sharon

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she’s aware of not knowing precisely the meaning of “ridge of high pressure” and “polar air mass”



— [ Back to Sharon

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semantic and epistemic deference can co-occur in claims

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co-occurrent semantic and epistemic deference need not be to the same deferee

# Some applications

# Some applications

— [ deference and cognitive development

# Some applications

—— [ deference and cognitive development

—— [ judicial deference



# — [ deference and cognitive development



— [ deference and cognitive development

children as naïve scientists

— [ deference and cognitive development

children as naïve scientists

the role of testimony

— [ deference and cognitive development

children as naïve scientists

the role of testimony

science, religion, etc.

— [ deference and cognitive development

children as naïve scientists

the role of testimony

science, religion, etc.

selective trust



# — [ testing selective trust

## testing selective trust

Familiarization Objects	Object names (true and false)	Test objects	Test names
ball	"That's a ball" "That's a shoe"	Colourful, pointed, bamboo object	"That's a toma" "That's a mido"
cup	"That's a cup" "That's a dog"	White, bulbous, rubber object	"That's a wug" "That's a dax"
book	"That's a book" "That's a chair"	Red, textured, paper object	"That's a blicket" "That's a dawnoo"

Koenig et al. 2004

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## Harris vs. Spelke & Sperber



# testing selective trust

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Harris vs. Spelke & Sperber  
group affinity

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language acquisition

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language acquisition

trust & epistemic deference



# judicial deference

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applications

— [ judicial deference

deference and review

— [ judicial deference

deference and review

administrative matters and the war on terror

# — [ judicial deference

deference and review

administrative matters and the war on terror

deference to the executive branch



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epistemic vs. linguistic judicial deference



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'

# — [ Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



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applications

# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



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applications

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applications

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applications



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



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applications



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



Aberdeen 2007

applications

# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

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applications

# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

2nd court

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applications



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

2nd court

1st court: evidence and revision



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

2nd court

1st court: evidence and revision

2nd court



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

2nd court

1st court: evidence and revision

2nd court

3rd court: "enemy combatant"

# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

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semantic deference



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



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semantic deference

epistemic deference



# Hamdi' vs. Rumsfeld'



1st court: defender

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semantic deference

epistemic deference

semantic deference

# Conclusion

# Conclusion

— [ different types of deference

# Conclusion

—— [ different types of deference

—— [ examples + criteria

# Conclusion

— [ different types of deference

— [ examples + criteria

— [ connection between some of these types

## CALVIN and HOBBS



thanks for your attention